

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 SIL-01 LAB-06 EB-11

COME-00 TRSE-00 /173 W

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R 261140Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8815

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USUN NEW YORK 872

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 3874

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, ELAB, SF

SUBJ: CARLETONVILLE INQUEST EXONERATES POLICE

REF: PRETORIA 3378 AND PREVIOUS

1. INQUEST INTO SEPTEMBER 11 CARLETONVILLE SHOOTINGS,
IN WHICH ELEVEN BLACK MINE WORKERS WERE KILLED BY POLICE,
CLOSED OCTOBER 25 WITH JUDGMENT EXONERATING POLICE FROM
ALL BLAME.

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2. FOR PAST THREE WEEKS, CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF BLOEMFONTEIN,

C.H. BADENHORST, HAS BEEN CONDUCTING OFFICIAL INQUEST INTO CARLETONVILLE SHOOTINGS. PRIME MINISTER VORSTER PROMISED THAT INQUEST WOULD CLEAR AIR OF ANY LINGERING DOUBTS ABOUT OVER-HASTY OR INHUMANE POLICE BEHAVIOR, MAINTAINING ALL ALONG THAT POLICE ACTED CORRECTLY IN SHOOTING RIOTING MINE WORKERS. IN COURSE OF INQUEST, BADENHORST TOOK TESTIMONY OF POLICE OFFICERS AND MEN, MINING COMPANY OFFICIALS AND MINE WORKERS, PAIN-STAKINGLY TRYING TO RECONSTRUCT TRAGIC EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11. RELATIVES OF DECEASED AND GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO WERE REPRESENTED BY HIGHLY RESPECTED SOUTH AFRICAN ATTORNEYS. BOTSWANA WAS REPRESENTED BY IKE MATLANE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE.

3. BADENHORST CONCLUDED THAT COMPANY OFFICIALS AND POLICE HAD TO DEAL WITH RAMPAGING MOB WHICH REFUSED APPEALS FOR RESTRAINT AND WAS THREATENING TO OVERWHELM WHITES IN MINE COMPOUND. HE SAID MINE OFFICIALS WERE JUSTIFIED IN CALLING POLICE AND, ALTHOUGH NOTING THAT ARRIVAL OF POLICE ACTED "LIKE A SPARK WHICH CAUSED A FIRE," THAT THEY CAME IN FULFILLMENT OF THEIR DUTY. ONCE THEY WERE ON SCENE, BADENHORST SAID POLICE HAD MADE AN HONORABLE AND CORRECT ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION, THAT POLICE OFFICERS' CONCERN FOR THEIR MEN WAS REASONABLE AND WELL-FOUNDED AND THAT SHOOTING OF RINGLEADERS WAS JUSTIFIED. ONLY CRITICISM HE MADE WAS THAT ONE OF POLICE OFFICERS SHOULD HAVE FIRED WARNING SHOTS BEFORE ORDERING LETHAL FIRE. BADENHURST ALSO SUGGESTED THAT POLICE WEAR GAS MASKS FOR THEIR OWN PROTECTION IN FUTURE RIOTOUS INCIDENTS; IT HAD EMERGED DURING INQUEST THAT SEVERAL POLICEMEN AND OFFICERS WERE OVERCOME BY THEIR OWN TEAR GAS.

4. AFTER OFFERING SYMPATHY OF COURT TO FAMILIES OF DECEASED, BADENHORST DECLARED INQUIRY CLOSED OCTOBER 25.

5. COMMENT: BADENHORST'S FINDINGS CONFIRM GENERAL VIEW OF CARLETONVILLE SHOOTINGS HERE. THERE MAY BE OBJECTIONS TO SOME ASPECTS OF INQUEST, SUCH AS EXTREMELY TOLERANT VIEW OF POLICE TACTICS AND FAILURE TO DELVE MORE DEEPLY INTO CAUSES OF LABOR UNREST, BUT MAIN FINDINGS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11 ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE CHALLENGED FROM WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ANYONE WILL TAKE UP PRIME MINISTER VORSTER'S OFFER OF FURTHER INVESTIGATION, WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO AUTHORIZE IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. NEVERTHELESS CARLETONVILLE SHOCK CONTINUES TO REVERBERATE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO ACT ON ANGLO-AMERICAN AND OTHER WHITE EMPLOYERS AS AN ADDITIONAL MOTIVE FOR IMPROVING LABOR

CONDITIONS.
HURD

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